

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

350 East Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska 99645 - 907-861-8683

BOROUGH MAYOR

Edna DeVries

BOROUGH CLERK

Lonnie R. McKechnie, CMC

BOROUGH MANAGER

Michael Brown

BOROUGH ATTORNEY

Nicholas Spiropoulos



BOROUGH ASSEMBLY

Tim Hale, District 1
Stephanie Nowers, District 2
Dee McKee, District 3
Robert Yundt, District 4
Bill Gamble, District 5
Dmitri Fonov, District 6
Ron Bernier, District 7

MEETING MINUTES

ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS

350 EAST DAHLIA AVENUE, PALMER

ASSEMBLY REGULAR MEETING

6:00 PM

TUESDAY, JUNE 4, 2024

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, June 4, 2024, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Mayor Edna DeVries.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: 4 - Assemblymember Dee McKee, Assemblymember Bill Gamble, Assemblymember Dmitri Fonov, and Assemblymember Ron Bernier

Telephonic: 3 - Assemblymember Tim Hale, Assemblymember Stephanie Nowers, and Assemblymember Robert Yundt

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented without objection.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was led by Ms. McKechnie, Borough Clerk.

Mayor DeVries read a proclamation in honor of Juneteeth and presented it to Aundra and Daphne Jackson.

V. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS

[24-079](#)

A. Budget Public Hearing Minutes: 04/25/04

B. Budget Public Hearing Minutes: 04/30/24

C. Budget Deliberations Minutes: 05/02/24

D. Regular Meeting Minutes: 05/07/24

The minutes were approved as presented without objection.

VI. REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE

A. AGENCY REPORTS (MSB 2.12.082; Seven minutes per person)

1. Reports From Cities

There were no reports provided.

2. Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District

There was no report provided.

3. State of Alaska

There was no report provided.

4. Alaska Safe Riders

Debra McGhan of Alaska Safe Riders, thanked the Assembly for their support of the safe rider program and directed the Assembly to watch the Alaska Safe Riders promotional video.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Joint Assembly/School Board Committee On School Issues

Mr. Brown reported on the activities of the most recent meeting.

2. Assembly Public Relations

Assemblymember Hale reported that he and Assemblymember Nowers attended the American Legion Auxiliary Girls event.

Assemblymember Fonov spoke to a recent incident in Denali National Park, during which a contractor was made to remove an American flag from their vehicle.

C. MANAGER COMMENTS

George Hays, Deputy Borough Manager, reported the findings of the Police Powers Task Force.

Mr. Brown reported on a recent meeting with stakeholders at the Jonesville Recreational Area, at which the discussion included advancing amenities and improvements and a possible public shooting range. Stated that he recently went to Skwentna for a community meeting regarding the West Susitna Access Road. Opined that it was a productive meeting.

Assemblymember Bernier moved to direct the Manager to identify and investigate two Borough-Owned properties in District No. 7 that would be suitable for a public shooting range. Location of properties should be within the northern region of District No. 7. After suitable properties are found, they will be brought forward to the classified as reserved use land, specifically for the purpose of a shooting range.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

1. State/Federal Legislation

2. Strategic Planning Issues

D. ATTORNEY COMMENTS

There were no comments provided.

E. CLERK COMMENTS

Ms. McKechnie spoke the upcoming meeting schedule and to the parliamentary procedure and Open Meeting Act training that she and the Borough Attorney are conducting next week.

F. CITIZEN AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE

[24-080](#)

1. Abbreviated Plat: 05/15/24
 2. Fishhook Community Council: 01/08/24, 01/11/24, 02/05/24, 03/04/24, 04/01/24
 3. Greater Talkeetna RSA Board of Supervisors: 04/11/24
 4. Meadow Lakes RSA Board of Supervisors: 03/14/24
 5. Midway RSA Board of Supervisors: 02/14/24
 6. Planning Commission: Resolution Nos. 24-06, 24-10
 7. Transportation Advisory Board: 08/18/23, 02/28/24
- The citizen and other correspondence were presented, and no comments were noted.

G. INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUMS

[IM 24-114](#)

Informing The Assembly Of A Grant Amendment For Time Extension Only, To Be Presented To The Borough Manager For Signature.
The informational memorandum was presented, and no comments were noted.

VII. SPECIAL ORDERS

A. PERSONS TO BE HEARD (MSB 2.12.081; Three Minutes Per Person.)

There were no persons to be heard.

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Three Minutes Per Person.)

[OR 24-056](#)

An Ordinance To Retain For Public Purpose A Parcel Located At 5256 South Shadowtree Drive, Which Was Acquired By The Borough Through Tax Foreclosure.
Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Jill Irsik, Land Disposal and Foreclosure Specialist, provided a staff report.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing.

The following persons spoke in support of Ordinance Serial No. 24-056: Dennis Wagner, Steve Wright, and Rob Donahue Boyer.

There being no others present who wished to testify, the public hearing closed and discussion moved to the Assembly.

Assemblymember Gamble moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 24-056.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

[OR 24-057](#) An Ordinance Extending The Time Limit For Completion Of Expiring Project Funds For The Assessments Mobile Application Project, Through June 30, 2025.
Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Cheyenne Heindel, Finance Director, provided a staff report.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing.

There being no one present who wished to testify, the public hearing closed, and discussion moved to the Assembly.

Assemblymember Bernier moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 24-057.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

C. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (Three Minutes Per Person.)

(The meeting recessed at 7:29 p.m. and reconvened at 7:45 p.m.)

The following persons spoke in support of Mat Su Health Foundation and in opposition of Resolution Serial No. 24-064: Lee Henrikson, Big Cabbage Radio President; Sandra Lewis; Gina McCollum; Joshua Gillmore; Duronda Twigg; Jessy Lakin; Mary Robinson; Aaron Clements; Patti Fisher; Mike Chiemelewski; Mary Revetta; Jeanne Troshynski; Elizabeth Ripley, Mat-Su Health Foundation Chief Executive Officer; Lebron McPhail; Jody Broadwell; Esther Pitts, Chief Community Impact Officer; Barb Doty; Hillary Sharp; and Gerry Mansur.

The following person spoke with admiration about Senator Lyda Green who passed within the last year and all the wonderful things she did for the Borough. Advised the body that there is a memorial for her on Saturday, June 8 at Janssen funeral home: Bill Stoltze.

The following person spoke to how they thought members for the Library Board should be seated. Spoke to concerns with pornographic books in borough libraries: Jackie Goforth,

The following person spoke to process for how board member seats for the Mat-Su Health Foundation are filled: Sammy Pokryfke.

The following person spoke in support of the Borough's work to find permanent buildings for charter schools: Jonathan Zeppa.

The following person spoke to her displeasure with the possibility of books being banned in Borough libraries: Kathy Kysar.

The following person spoke to ideas for decreasing air traffic noise: Travis Friesen.

The following persons spoke to their disappointment that a candidate from District 7 for the Library Citizen's Advisory Committee was not supported by the District 7 Assembly member: Jennifer Peronis and Ruth Wood

The following person extended her condolences for the loss of a Borough employee, Karol Reise, spoke to her opposition to Resolution Serial No. 24-064, in support Mat Su Health Foundation, and to concerns with flaws in medical billing: Stephanie Allen.

The following person spoke in opposition to baseless allegations that librarians are grooming children, concerns that her Assembly representative did not support a Library Citizens' Advisory Committee candidate from her district, in support of the Mat-Su Health foundation, and in opposition to Resolution Serial No. 24-064: Kathy Trump.

D. CONSENT AGENDA

2. ACTION MEMORANDUMS

[AM 24-059](#) Authorization To Renew With Tyler Technologies In The Amount Of \$569,058 The Enterprise Permitting And Licensing Software For The Period Of July 1, 2024, Through June 30, 2027.

[AM 24-060](#) To Vacate A Portion Of The Right-Of-Way Of North Nordic Lane Located North Of North Nancy Lake Parkway, East Of Suncrest Lake, South Of Rainbow Lake, Southeast Of North Rainbow Shore Drive Lying Within Section 36, Township 19 North, Range 5 West, Seward Meridian, Alaska.

[AM 24-061](#) Approval Of Utility Relocation Costs To Matanuska Telecom Association, Inc. In the Amount of \$141,806.53 For The South Goose Bay Drive, South Tradewinds Circle, West Snug Harbor Avenue, South Birch Cove Circle, and South Cook Inlet Circle Improvements Project.

[AM 24-062](#) Approval Of Change Order No. 4 To Mass Excavation, Inc. For The Valley View Drive, Spinnaker Drive, Admiralty Circle, And Neptune Circle Road Improvements Under Contract No. 23-092B For A Time Extension Until August 15, 2024, For Substantial Completion Date With The Final Completion Date Of September 30, 2024.

[AM 24-063](#) Approving A Waiver Under MSB 2.71.090, For Former Employee Jeremy Bloomstrom To Provide Contracted Services For The Borough Information Technology Department.

[AM 24-064](#) Authorization To Renew The Borough's Enterprise Financial Management Software In The Amount Of \$283,674 For New World ERP With Tyler Technologies For The Period Of July 1, 2024, Through June 30, 2025.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Bernier moved to approve the consent agenda as read into the record by the Clerk.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

1. RESOLUTIONS

[RS 24-064](#) A Resolution Encouraging The Mat-Su Health Foundation To Return To Its Former Policy Of Allowing Members To Vote In The Election Of Board Members; And Encouraging The Mat-Su Health Foundation To Advocate For Lower Pricing To Benefit The Residents Of The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Who Require Hospital Services.

Sponsors: Yundt

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Nowers moved to adopt Resolution Serial No. 24-064.

Assemblymember Yundt moved a primary amendment to Resolution Serial No. 24-064, by inserting the following whereas clauses:

*** WHEREAS, Borough staff have reviewed 11 costs comparing local hospitals costs and it has been found that Mat-Su Regional Hospital is more expensive and the Borough paid more at Mat-Su Regional Hospital; and**

*** WHEREAS, of the 11 samples, the amount paid to Mat-Su Regional ranged from 1.2 to 9.6 times the amount paid to Alaska Regional; and**

*** WHEREAS, the Manager is being directed to create a program incentivizing use of Alaska Regional Hospital and encouraging the School District to do the same.**

Assemblymember Bernier moved to suspend the rules and extend the meeting past 10 p.m. and not to exceed 10:30 p.m.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 2 - Assemblymember Hale, and Assemblymember Nowers
Assemblymember Yundt moved a primary amendment to Resolution Serial No. 24-064, by inserting the following clauses:

*** WHEREAS, the Government is supposed to prevent monopolies from being created, but in the case of Alaska, due to the Certificate of Need program, it has in fact created a monopoly protecting the health care industry; and**

*** BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Assembly is asking the Alaska State Legislature to address and change the Certificate of Need process, so that the Alaska healthcare system as a whole can become a true, free market system; and**

***directed the clerk to amend the title of the resolution including certificate of need language.**

[Clerk's Note: The resolution title was amended by inserting the following at the end of the title: "and requesting that the Alaska state legislature revise the certificate of need process."]

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 2 - Assemblymember Hale, and Assemblymember Nowers
Assemblymember Hale called for the question (to stop debate).

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

The main motion passed as amended by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 2 - Assemblymember Hale, and Assemblymember Nowers

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

IX. VETO

There were no vetoes.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. INTRODUCTIONS (For Public Hearing 06/18/24, Assembly Chambers)

[OR 24-031](#) An Ordinance Amending MSB 8.40, Liquor License Referrals, Regarding Transfers Of Alcoholic Beverage Licenses From The Borough Into The Cities.

Sponsors: Yundt

[OR 24-058](#) An Ordinance Reappropriating \$80,000 From The Planning Studies Account To Port Mackenzie Business Development And Marketing Account For The Purposes Of Hiring A Consulting Firm Specializing In Marine Facilities To Assist With Updating The Port Mackenzie Master Plan.

RS 24-059: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For Updating The Port MacKenzie Master Plan.

[OR 24-060](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating An Additional \$5,780 From The Alaska State Division Of Homeland Security And Emergency Management Grant Program, For Community Emergency Response Training.

RS 24-057: A Resolution Assembly Approving The Revised Scope Of Work And Amended Budget For The Alaska State Division Of Homeland Security And Emergency Management Grant Community Emergency Response Training.

[OR 24-061](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$72,000 Received From The Surplus Sale Of Road Service Area Equipment To Purchase A Vehicle For The New Road Maintenance Superintendent.
RS 24-060: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget To Purchase A Vehicle For The New Road Maintenance Superintendent.

[OR 24-062](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$19,987.55 Of Revenues From Fiscal Year 2024 Animal Care And Regulation Enforcement Contracts with the Cities of Palmer And Houston, To A Project Account For Improvements To The Animal Care Facility.
RS 24-061: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For \$19,987.55 Of Revenues From Fiscal Year 2024 City Animal Care And Regulation Enforcement Contracts To A Project Account For Improvements To The Animal Care Facility.

[OR 24-064](#) An Ordinance Approving A Reappropriation Of \$115,000 From The Land And Resource Management Division Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget, To An Online Auction Services Provider Project.
RS 24-063: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For The Online Auction Services Provider Project.
Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Bernier moved to introduce the legislation as read into the record by the Clerk and to set the public hearings for June 18, 2024.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

B. MAYORAL NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

1. VACANCY REPORT

There was no vacancy report.

C. OTHER NEW BUSINESS

There was no other new business.

D. REFERRALS (For Referral To The Planning Commission For 90 Days Or Other Date Specified By The Assembly)

There were no referrals.

XI. RECONSIDERATION

There were no reconsiderations.

XII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS

Assemblymember Bernier reminisced about how much he has always loved the month of June. Noted that June 6, is the anniversary of D Day. Said a prayer.

Mr. Brown advised that at the next meeting he will be adding discussion regarding unmaintained roads and firearm safety training.

Ms. McKechnie thanked the body for her evaluation. Noted that it is helpful to her to have feedback.

Assemblymember Fonov stated that he would like to have another community cleanup discussion meeting.

Assemblymember Nowers noted her disappointment in Resolution Serial No. 24-064 being adopted. Spoke to concerns with health care costs. Expressed her condolences over the passing of Karol Reise, a Planning Department employee.

Assemblymember Yundt thanked Ms. McKechnie and her staff for their hard work. Thanked Assemblymember Bernier for his motion directing the Manager to find land suitable for a shooting range. Noted that he too has concerns with the costs of health care and would like to see them lower.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:11 p.m.